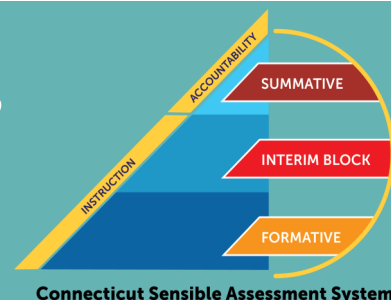




Student Assessment News

Connecticut State Department of Education
Performance Office



Connecticut Sensible Assessment System

January 2024

CTStudentAssessment@ct.gov

Student Participation in Alternate Assessments

Use the quick links below to access articles and/or sections included in this newsletter.

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The Connecticut Alternate Assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science are designed for students with the most significant and complex cognitive disabilities to demonstrate their skills on grade-level standards. Federal law expects that no more than one percent of all students assessed will take an alternate assessment. Connecticut's 2022-23 rates are around 1.2%. Though they have declined from pre-pandemic rates of around 1.5%, they continue to exceed the one percent cap. Consequently, the U.S. Department of Education is requiring the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to adjust its statewide policies and practices, provide training and supports, and closely monitor districts that exceed the one percent threshold. Participation rates in the alternate assessment for Nexus district for the past several years are [posted on EdSight](#). Districts that exceed one percent are asked to review their internal practices and procedures for identifying students for the alternate assessment.

The CSDE Performance and Special Education offices may also contact these districts to provide further support and monitoring activities and request written justification for assessing more than one percent of their students with the alternate assessment. The eligibility criteria for an alternate assessment is outlined in the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Eligibility Form](#) and is determined annually by the Planning and Placement Team using the embedded form within the Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS). If you have any questions, please contact Abe Krisst at abe.krisst@ct.gov.

Save the Date - CAAELP Office Hours

The CSDE will be holding CAAELP Office Hours on February 13, 2024 from 1:30 to 2:30. For more information please visit the CSDE [Calendar](#).

2024 Summative Test Administration Training for District Administrators

The 2024 Test Administration Training for District Administrators (DA's in TIDE) was held during the week of January 15th. The slides and recording are posted to [our website](#).

CSDE Assessment Guidelines

The [Assessment Guidelines](#) provides detailed information related to accessibility supports and accommodations on statewide assessments. Additionally, it provides guidance related to special circumstances such as reader supports/accommodations, language supports for ELs/MLs, medical exemptions, information about non-standard special documented accommodations, and much more!

Student Assessment News: January 2024

Special Populations Updates

Submitting Designated Supports for Students Without IEP/Section 504 Plans

District Administrators should establish a process for setting designated supports in TIDE for eligible students who do not have an IEP or Section 504 Plan. Test supports must be set prior to the start of the student's test session (either manually or via batch upload). Below are a few resources to help inform educator team decisions:

- [Accessibility Chart](#): This resource provides a range of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available to students when accessing the Smarter Balanced and the NGSS Science Assessments.
- (Optional) [Language Supports/Designated Supports Forms](#): These forms can be completed by the educator team to determine appropriate supports available by subtest (Smarter Balanced Math/ELA and NGSS [Refer to pages 2 and 3]).
- [Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learner/Multilingual Learners](#): This resource identifies a variety of language supports available to ELs/MLs on the Smarter Balanced and NGSS Assessments.
- [Reader Options Table](#): This resource defines the purpose, test requirements, and necessary documentation (if applicable) for various embedded and non-embedded Smarter Balanced and NGSS reader supports.
- [TIDE User Guide](#) and [Accessing TIDE](#)
- [Trainings](#): A variety of recorded webinars and PDFs of informational sessions are available on the Student Assessment webpage. For example, educators can refer to the District Administrator for Testing Training (held on January 17-19, 2024), the optional Test Administrator Training, and Best Practices for Determining Accommodations for Statewide Assessments.

LAS Links Paper Order Reminders

Order Window: November 13, 2023 – February 2, 2024

Return by Date: February 23, 2024, is the final date to request completed District Accommodated/Paper Form UPS Pick-up to send to DRC for processing.

For detailed information on Accommodated Paper Tests and Administration, please review the [Accommodated Paper Test Administration](#) and [Accommodated Paper Test Administration Video](#).

Ordering Large Print or Braille Test Booklets for Smarter Balanced and NGSS

District Administrators can order large-print and braille kits for Smarter Balanced and NGSS in TIDE any time after January 26, 2024. Confirm that the student has the non-embedded accommodation set properly in TIDE. If the accommodation is missing or is incorrectly reported, contact the student's Case Manager in CT-SEDS.

- From the Orders task menu on the TIDE dashboard, the DA selects Paper Orders.
- Search for orders by District or School.
- Enter the quantity needed for each of the materials needed.

Districts can track shipments in TIDE.

Special Populations Updates

CTAA and CTAS

The required annual, online [Alternate Assessment System Training Course](#) for teachers administering the CTAA and CTAS is available on the Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal. The training and quiz must be completed before teachers with the TEA user role can access all secure materials required for testing and test administration.

Resources to support required training for CTAA and CTAS:

- [Overview for District Administrators](#)
- [Overview for Teachers Administering the Alternate](#)
- [CTAA Test Administration Manual](#)
- [CTAS Test Administration Manual](#)
- [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training Course](#)
- [Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Training Resources](#)

CAAELP

The CAAELP/Alt ELPA Training is accessed through [ELPA 21](#). This training is for any educator who is designated as a TEA in TIDE and will be administering the CAAELP Assessment this year. This training must be completed annually (each testing school year), and the certificate of training completion is maintained locally through a process determined by the district. There are separate training modules available for ELACs and TEAs. Please be aware that first time users will need to enter a district verification code, which is *elpa21* (all lowercase).

Resources to support required training for CAAELP:

- [CAAELP Training Announcement](#)
- [Directions for Accessing CAAELP Online Training for New Users](#)
- [Directions for Accessing CAAELP Online Training for Returning Users](#)
- [CAAELP Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#)
- [Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency \(CAAELP\) Test Administration Manual](#)
- [2023-24 Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Early Stopping Rule](#)

Reminders for TEAs Administering the CTAA ELA to Students in Grades 3 & 4

A verbal or non-verbal form is available to students in Grades 3 and 4 taking the CTAA English language arts subtest. These forms differ in the presentation of the foundational word identification or open response items. Prior to testing, the TEA should select the most appropriate option based on the student's communication mode on the student's dashboard in TIDE.

The Non-Verbal Form presents the open-response items in a selected-response format for students who do not respond:

- with oral speech;
- are blind, deaf, or deaf-blind; or
- use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Please refer to the [Connecticut Alternate Assessment Test \(CTAA\) Test Administration Manual](#) for details.

Special Populations

Getting Ready to Test on the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System

In preparing for administration of the Connecticut Alternate Assessments (CTAA, CTAS, or CAAELP), TEAs should review the TEA Responsibility Checklists for each specific assessment.

- [The Connecticut Alternate Assessment TEA Responsibility Checklist](#)
- [The Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment TEA Responsibility Checklist](#)
- [The Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency TEA Responsibility Checklist](#)

Additionally, TEAs will want to familiarize themselves and students with the Connecticut Alternate Assessments through the online practice tests. These tests allow the opportunity to experience the test procedures, training, technology, example item types, and navigation prior to the actual summative assessment.

The online practice tests for students are located on the [Connecticut Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal](#). Additionally, TEAs can access the CAAELP Practice Test Administrator Directions and Scoring Rubrics located on the [CAAELP Resources Page](#). This is important for students as it will allow them to become familiar with the technical skills and types of items (test questions) they will encounter on the CAAELP summative assessment.

Early Stopping Rule Submission for CTAA, CTAS, and CAAELP

The Early Stopping Rule (ESR) is for students who do not show an observable mode of communication. Refer to the [2023-2024 Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Early Stopping Rule and Student Response Check](#) guidance for details. Teachers who believe their student may qualify should administer the Student Response Check (SRC) (included in Appendix A of the ESR guidelines) to determine eligibility between December 1, 2023, and February 1, 2024. If the student does not demonstrate an observable response during any of the three SRC trials, and the student's IEP documented goals and objectives support the development of communication, the TEA will complete the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Early Stopping Rule Request and Attestation Form (located in Appendix C of the ESR guidelines) and return it to their DA no later than February 1, 2024. The DA will then submit the form in TIDE by March 1, 2024, for processing. District Administrators should select from the "Forms" drop-down menu under the Preparing for Testing section in TIDE.

1. From the TIDE menu, select Forms and choose the "Submit Forms" option.
2. Select the "Early Stopping Rule" from the drop-down menu.
3. Complete (and upload the signed ESR Request and Attestation form) and submit it no later than March 1, 2024.
4. After the form is submitted in TIDE and is approved by the CSDE, the ESR Indicator will be activated on the student dashboard.

No further action will be required on behalf of the teacher or student if the student meets eligibility through the SRC. Thus, if the attestation form is approved by the CSDE, the TEA will not administer any portion of the CTAA, CTAS, or CAAELP to the student. Once the ESR is approved by CSDE, the ESR indicator will populate on the student's TIDE dashboard.

Students in PSIS Who Attend Out-of-State Facilities or In-State Non-Approved Facilities

Do you have a student that is being educated in an out-of-state facility or at an in-state, non-approved school? Please refer to this [resource](#) with a description for how to administer the Smarter Balanced Assessments (Grades 3-8), the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) (Grades 5, 8, and 11), the Connecticut SAT School Day (Grade 11), and the CTAA/CTAS (Grades 3-8, and 11). *Note: These procedures do not apply to the CAAELP (Grades K-12).

Special Populations Updates

ELP Domain Exemptions are available for the Listening and/or Speaking Domains for LAS Links or CAAELP.

- If a student is identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing, they may not be able to participate in the Listening subtest due to this disability.
- ELs/MLs with an IEP or 504 Plan may be non-verbal and, even when provided assistive technology or augmentative and alternate communication supports, may not be able to participate in the Speaking subtest.
- EL/ML students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan who cannot access the Listening or Speaking domains due to their disability may request a domain exemption for the applicable subtest.
- Please note a separate form should be submitted for each Domain requested for both LAS Links and CAAELP prior to testing the student. Communicate this information and expectations clearly to test administrators.

LAS Links Domain Exemption

For the LAS Links assessment, the ELAC should have submitted the [LAS Links Domain Exemption Form](#) by December 22, 2023. In the event of a late submission, you must also notify Michael Sabados at Michael.Sabados@ct.gov.

CAAELP Domain Exemption

The CAAELP Domain Exemption Form is submitted by the District Administrator (DA) for Testing. The Form is located under Preparing for Testing. The [CAAELP Domain Exemptions Guidance](#) provides additional information and support for domain exemptions on the CAAELP.

How To Complete and Submit the Domain Exemption for CAAELP in TIDE

1. District Administrators should select from the “Forms” drop-down menu under the Preparing for Testing section in TIDE. Choose the “Submit Forms” option.
2. Choose “CAAELP (Alt ELPA)” from the drop-down menu.
3. Complete and submit the Domain Exemption. If the student qualifies for an exemption for both Speaking and Listening, separate exemption requests must be submitted no later than March 22, 2024.

Medical Exemptions

In Connecticut, the exemption determination for a medical emergency rests primarily on the following criteria: the student is unable to attend school and is medically/emotionally unavailable for homebound/hospitalized instruction for the entire testing window. This process is described in the [Assessment Guidelines](#). Contact Deirdre Ducharme or Katie Seifert if you think you have a student who is eligible for a medical exemption. Based on eligibility, DAs will be provided with a Medical Exemption form for completion, signature by the student’s physician, and submission to the CSDE. Please keep in mind that there are assessment specific deadlines for receiving these forms:

- March 8, 2024 - LAS Links
- April 5, 2024 - CAAELP
- April 26, 2024 - Connecticut SAT School Day
- June 7, 2024 - Smarter Balanced, NGSS, Connecticut Alternate Assessments

2023-24 Public School Information System (PSIS) and State Assessments

The Public School Information System (PSIS) provides data to test delivery systems for state summative assessments administered to Connecticut public school students. These assessments include the LAS Links, the Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment, Smarter Balanced Assessment, Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) in English language arts and mathematics, Connecticut Alternate Science (CTAS) Assessment, and the Connecticut SAT School Day. **District PSIS Coordinators must work closely with Testing Coordinators, English Language Assessment Coordinators (ELACs), and SAT Test Coordinators to ensure that student information is being reported accurately.**

The state relies on districts to provide accurate reporting of PSIS student-level data. Select fields such as English Learner status, Special Education status, and Section 504 status must be updated prior to testing to ensure students eligible for accommodations may access them. These select fields need to be updated frequently in PSIS for accommodations to sync between CT-SEDS and TIDE as well as to populate the Alternate Flag Indicator. Data are used for public/secure reporting of statewide test results and as part of Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System.

The PSIS Registration module has been updated to include the following Testing Demographic fields:

- Special Education (SPED) Status,
- Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) Status,
- English Learner/Multilingual Learner (EL/ML) Status,
- Military Family,
- Homeless,
- Recently Arrived EL/ML, and
- Section 504 Status.

These seven values must reflect the student's status at the time of testing for the 2023-24 school year. The SPED, FRL, EL/ML, Military Family, and Homeless have been loaded with the values reported in the October PSIS Collection Freeze Zero file (i.e., freeze file from the collection generated on November 1, 2023). The values for Recently Arrived EL and Section 504 were not pulled from Freeze Zero because these data are not reported in the PSIS October collection. These values have been set to "No" in the Registration Module and must be updated in the PSIS Registration Module for testing and reporting

purposes.

Please note, that if the status of any the first five fields changed from the value reported in the October PSIS Collection Freeze Zero, or if the student being tested was not in the PSIS October Collection Freeze Zero, the District PSIS Coordinator must update the student's record in the PSIS Registration Module. Changes to the Testing Demographic data can be made via the "Edit Registration/Unregister" page in the PSIS Registration Module or by batch. The Testing Demographics Record Layout for batch uploads can be found in the [PSIS Reference Guide Record Layout](#) located on the PSIS help site.

District PSIS Coordinators must make all changes to student enrollment and demographic information directly into the PSIS Registration Module. Student demographic values will be saved and the fields will be locked in PSIS on the following dates for accountability calculations:

- March 1, 2024, for LAS Links;
- March 29, 2024, for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP);
- April 19, 2024, for the Connecticut SAT School Day; and
- May 31, 2024, for Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and the Connecticut Alternate Assessment System Assessments (CTAS and CTAA).

The Missing Connecticut Testing Demographic Status Values report is available in PSIS Registration Module, and the Active Roster download has been updated to include the Testing Demographic Values. Data from the PSIS Registration Module are updated on a nightly basis in both the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) and is forthcoming for DRC's INSIGHT System. Again, these seven fields in the PSIS Registration Module must reflect the student's status at the time of testing.

For accommodations to sync from CT-SEDS to TIDE, students must be identified as Special Education or Section 504 in the PSIS Registration Module. Similarly, for a student to access a LAS Links assessment in the DRC Insight system, a student must be identified as an English learner/multilingual learner in the PSIS Registration Module.

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Sensible Assessment Community of Practice Virtual Meetings

Beginning in January, the Performance Office will host a monthly Community of Practice (COP) meeting to share ideas about implementing sensible and balanced assessment systems. The purpose of this COP is to foster a deeper understanding of the variety of assessments and tools available to districts through the CSDE’s Statewide Sensible Assessment System so that assessments are only used for their intended purposes and any redundant assessments are trimmed or eliminated. In these virtual meetings, the Performance Office team and select school districts will share resources from the CSDE’s Statewide Sensible Assessment System that can be used (or are currently being used) to support classroom teachers to target instruction and learning.

Register for these meetings using the hyperlinks in the “Time/Topic” column. These meetings will be recorded and posted to the CSDE website for those who cannot attend.

Time/Topic	Topic Description
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>January 31, 2024</u> <u>3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</u> <u>Non-Standard Uses of Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim Assessments and District Sharing</u></p>	<p>This virtual meeting will provide an overview of some of the non-standard uses of the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. There will be a demonstration of the various ways the interim assessments can be used other than just formally administering them to students and analyzing results. Connecticut educators will share their experiences implementing interims in non-standard ways.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>February 28, 2024</u> <u>3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</u> <u>Tools for Teachers and District Sharing</u></p>	<p>In this virtual meeting, participants will learn about Tools for Teachers (T4T), a free, online collection of resources aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts. These resources support K–12 teachers in their use of the formative assessment process to adjust teaching and improve learning for all students. Connecticut educators will share their experiences and suggestions related to T4T.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>March 27, 2024</u> <u>3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</u> <u>NGSS Interims and District Sharing</u></p>	<p>This virtual meeting will provide an update on the new item clusters and stand-alone items added to the NGSS Interims in December 2023. Additionally, participants will review resources and updated information to support the use of the NGSS Interims. Connecticut educators will share strategies that incorporate the NGSS Interim Assessments as tools to inform curriculum and instruction.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>April 24, 2024</u> <u>3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</u> <u>Smarter Balanced Interims and District Sharing</u></p>	<p>This virtual meeting will review some of the resources and updated information available for the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments. Connecticut educators will share strategies that incorporate the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments as tools to inform curriculum and instruction.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>May 29, 2024</u> <u>3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</u> <u>Using Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim Results and District Sharing</u></p>	<p>This virtual meeting will present an overview of some of the ways that Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim Assessment results can be analyzed using the Centralized Reporting System. Connecticut educators will share their experiences and provide tips on analyzing Smarter Balanced/NGSS Interim results using the Centralized Reporting System.</p>

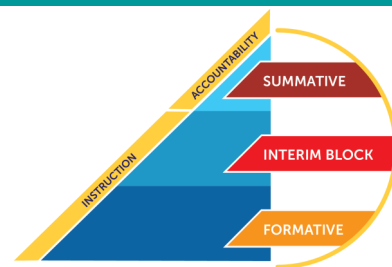
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Summative Assessment Calendar for 2023-24

Assessment	Dates
Secure Browser for Smarter, NGSS and CTAA	To prepare for the 2023-24 school year, please ensure you have updated the secure browser on each staff and student device. Please access the Technology Resources to support this process.
English Language Proficiency Assessment-LAS Links	January 2—March 1, 2024
CAAELP (Connecticut Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency)	February 1—March 29, 2024
Connecticut SAT School Day	March 4 – April 19, 2024 (Within the test window, schools can choose primary and make-up test dates.)
NGSS	February 5– May 31, 2024 (Grade 11) March 25– May 31, 2024 (Grades 5 and 8)
Connecticut Alternate Assessment—CTAA	March 25– May 31, 2024
Connecticut Alternate Science Assessment—CTAS (Administered throughout the year)	(Upload Window for Submission through the DEI: CTAS Student Score Worksheet) March 25-May 31, 2024 (Grades 5, 8, and 11)
Connecticut Smarter Balanced Assessments	March 25-May 31, 2024
Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment	Anytime during the school year.

Register for email updates

To automatically receive the *Student Assessment News* and/or other announcements, [register for e-mail updates](#) on the CT Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal.



Connecticut Sensible Assessment System